

PARRY D. SORENSEN

## *Nauvoo Times and Seasons*

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THE SIX-YEAR period between 1839 and 1845 was one of great changes for the Mormon people. This was the period when the scattered and persecuted members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints established a prospering city on the banks of the Mississippi. They called their city Nauvoo, and it had a population estimated at 12,000 to 20,000 when Chicago had less than 5,000. With a population of this size the civic-religious organization of the city made it a powerful political force. During this period, also, the controversial doctrine of polygamy was introduced. These two developments brought about the chain of events that led to the assassination of Joseph Smith, the Mormon leader and prophet, and to bitter squabbles over who was to succeed him. The period ended with more persecutions and finally with the great Mormon exodus to the Rocky Mountains.

During all these six years — six years and three months, to be exact — the church published, without interruption, a sixteen-page paper called the *Times and Seasons*, which

chronicled faithfully the rise and fall of Nauvoo, the City of the Saints. When the Mormons moved there, the town (known as Commerce until May, 1840) was little more than a swamp on the Mississippi. Located between two sharp bends in the river, the town jutted out so that it faced the river on three sides. Joseph Smith described it as follows:

The place was literally a wilderness. The land was mostly covered with trees and bushes, and much of it so wet that it was with the utmost difficulty a footman could get through, and totally impossible for teams. Commerce was so unhealthful, very few could live there; but believing that it might become a healthy place by the blessing of heaven to the Saints, and no more eligible place presenting itself, I considered it wisdom to make an attempt to build up a city.<sup>1</sup>

While a handful of the faithful were struggling to get established in that wilderness, the *Times and Seasons* made its first appearance in November, 1839. Four months earlier, in July, the town's residents had received handbills announcing the new publication:

#### PROSPECTUS

The members being acquainted with the scattered conditions of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and realizing the anxiety which rests in the bosoms of all the Saints who are scattered abroad, to learn of the conditions and the welfare of the Church, have procured a printing press and materials and will publish a monthly periodical, at this place, containing all general information respecting the Church; as also a history of the unparalleled persecution, which we, as a people, received in Missouri by order of the Executive of that State — by which many innocent men and children were most inhumanly murdered — others dragged from the bosom of their families, without any process whatever, by an armed soldiery, and thrust into prison and irons, there remaining a long time without knowing the reasons why they were thus treated — women insulted — houses plundered and burned — and finally, to end the scene of persecution, expell [*sic*], as exiles, from the state, in the winter season, the whole society; in all, from ten to twelve thousand

1. B. H. Roberts, ed., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, 2d ed., 1932-1951), III: 375.

souls! A statement of facts concerning the foregoing transactions, will not be uninteresting to all who wish to see the pure principles of Republicanism preserved unviolated.

The *Times and Seasons* will contain communications from the traveling Elders from time to time; its columns will also, frequently be enriched with letters from gentlemen traveling in Europe, which will greatly augment its interest.

It is not the intention of the Publishers to admit any thing into this paper which will be calculated to engender strife or turmoil, neither will they interfere with political matters, as it is not their wish to cultivate any principle which tends to put people at variance with one another, but rather those principles that are calculated to make men happy in this world, and secure unto them eternal life, in that which is to come.

TERMS: One Dollar per annum, payable, in all cases in advance. Any person procuring 10 subscriptions and forwarding us ten dollars current money, shall receive one volume gratis. All current Bank notes of any denomination will be received on subscriptions. Letters on business must be addressed to the Publishers POST PAID.

ROBINSON & SMITH  
Commerce, Hancock Co., Ill.  
July, 1839<sup>2</sup>

The five-month delay between the appearance of the prospectus and publication of the first number was due to the illness of the proprietors, Ebenezer Robinson and Don Carlos Smith; both men had been stricken with malaria. Robinson was an experienced printer, who later branched out into other publishing activities for the church; and Smith, the youngest brother of the Mormon Prophet, had learned the printing trade on the *Elders' Journal*, published by the church in Kirtland, Ohio, and in Far West, Missouri.

2. *Times and Seasons*, Nov., 1839. A minimum of punctuation has been added here and the spelling corrected. The second word, "members," in the handbill was changed to "subscribers" in *Times and Seasons*. The Illinois State Historical Library has a file of *Times and Seasons* with a few of the early issues missing; complete files are in the historian's offices of both the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City and the Reorganized Church in Independence, Mo.

The *Times and Seasons* was printed on a press that literally came out of the ground. When troops surrounded Far West on November 2, 1838, and arrested more than thirty leaders of the church, including Don Carlos Smith and Robinson, the press and type (then being used to print the *Elders' Journal*) were buried in the dooryard of a member named Dawson. When Smith and Robinson were released from jail several months later, they dug the press out of the ground and carted it to Commerce.

Their first printing shop in Commerce was in the basement of a warehouse at the corner of Water and Bain (now Fifth) streets, two short blocks from the log cabin Joseph Smith occupied when he settled in the town. The basement had a dirt floor with a spring of running water in one corner of the room. (Only the bare outline of the building's foundation is visible today.)

The first number of the *Times and Seasons* contained a reprint of the prospectus and an apology for the tardy appearance of the paper. The remainder of the sixteen-page issue was devoted to extracts from Joseph Smith's private journal, in which he described the persecutions in Missouri and his confinement in the jail at Liberty, Missouri.

The paper's slogan, "Truth Will Prevail," appeared beneath the masthead on the first page.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout its first year of publication, the *Times and Seasons* was issued once a month, with sixteen pages (approximately 5¾ by 9¾ inches in size) per issue. A series, written by Hyrum Smith, the Prophet's brother, about the Missouri persecutions began in the second number and ran until October, 1840. The second number also carried an item about the purchase by the church of three tracts of land in Iowa, across the river from Nauvoo, or Commerce (as it was still known). One tract was in Keokuk; another at Nashville, six miles north; and the third at Montrose, directly across the river. The Montrose tract contained

3. It read "Truth Will Ptevail" in the first issue.

thirty thousand acres, stretching from the Mississippi River west to the Des Moines River. A column of death notices was also begun in the second issue. It contained a list of twenty-five people of various ages who had died during the previous month — grim evidence of the hardships the people were suffering.

Conforming to the editorial style of the day, wives were referred to as "consorts." Here is a typical death notice: "In this place, Nov. 6th, Rhoda, consort of Hezekiah Fisk, aged 64 years."<sup>4</sup> Another column, devoted to marriages, was headed not "Weddings" or "Marriages" but "Hymenials."

One other noteworthy item in the second issue was a poem, "The Slaughter on Shoal Creek, Caldwell County, Missouri," by Eliza R. Snow, a talented young woman who seemed able to write a poem appropriate to any occasion. She also wrote the words of many hymns sung at church affairs after the move to Utah. Hardly an issue of the *Times and Seasons* went to press during the next six years without something from Miss Snow's pen.

Another frequent contributor was Parley P. Pratt, one of the church's twelve apostles and probably the foremost early Mormon writer.<sup>5</sup> Like Miss Snow, he wrote the words of several hymns, but his main output was tracts and articles about the new religion. His writings still rank with the best in church literature, and his scholarly ability was a valuable asset to the youthful Joseph Smith, who lacked formal education. The first of Pratt's writings to be published in the *Times and Seasons* was a poem (in the February, 1840, issue) he had written while in the Liberty jail with his fellow church leaders. It was headed "Zion in Captivity. A Lamentation. By Parley P. Pratt, While Chained in Prison."

4. *Times and Seasons*, Dec., 1839.

5. While laboring as a missionary in Van Buren County, Arkansas, Pratt was killed on May 13, 1857, by a man who accused him of alienating his wife's affections. He is immortalized today by Parley's Canyon on Highways 30 and 40 near Salt Lake City.

A regular *Times and Seasons* feature that began in the second issue and ran for the next six years was reports of church conferences held throughout the country. The purpose of these conferences, which were conducted by the Mormon missionaries, was to boost the morale of church members and gain new converts. The reports sent to the *Times and Seasons* by the traveling elders were usually full of good news about the progress of their work, although occasionally they did mention such opposition as being run out of town or threatened with tar and feathers. The full minutes of each conference were generally published, including such details as who opened with prayer, what songs were sung, who preached the sermon and on what subject, who closed with prayer, and how many were baptized.

The exact nature of the financial structure of the *Times and Seasons* is not known, but it is believed that Robinson and Smith ran the paper on a "franchise" basis. That is, the press and type belonged to the church, and the two proprietors were allowed to operate the paper and print shop for what they could make out of it. That Joseph Smith held some kind of control is evidenced by the fact that he and the apostles took over operation of the paper in 1842.

Although the *Times and Seasons* had church backing, its editors did have financial difficulties, and in the fourth issue (February, 1840) they reprinted the following statement from the *New York Era*:

#### IMPORTANT TO EDITORS

The following is an extract from the instructions recently addressed to all the postmasters of the United States by the Postmaster General:

"Postmasters may enclose money in a letter to a publisher of a newspaper, to pay the subscription of a third person, and frank the letter, if written by himself."

This liberal regulation will be highly advantageous to the interest of the newspaper press, and therefore favorable to the general distribution of public information.—*N.Y. Era*.



Beginning in that issue a listing of the paper's agents was published. It included men in Illinois, Pennsylvania, New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Tennessee, North Carolina, England, and Scotland, as well as "travelling agents" who had no permanent addresses. Almost all were church missionaries who were preaching in the states where they served as agents, and the list grew longer as the number of missionaries increased.

Apparently some of the brethren were not too prompt in remitting subscription money, however, for an appeal signed by the High Council was published in the same issue asking the agents to send the money as soon as they received it. Although the appeal was backed by the authority of the church, it did not produce the desired results, and the editors resorted to a more direct approach. In the May issue they wrote:

We are under the painful necessity of refering [*sic*] *some* of our readers to an article appearing in the February number, from the High Council, expressing their disapprobation of all persons who have received monies on subscription for the *Times and Seasons*, and have not paid it over to the place where it was sent. We are compelled to state, at this time, that there are several who have used our money without authority, and who, moreover, do not manifest any particular anxiety to pay it to us after having the use of it for some time; this is therefore, to inform all such persons, that unless the money is forthcoming soon, we shall be under the necessity of publishing their names in the paper, and also of withholding the papers ordered by said persons. It is with great reluctance that we make this announcement, but our circumstances, and the nature of the business requires it; as it is impossible to sustain the press without means.

This threat must have had the desired effect, for no mention of the subject was made in subsequent issues.

Another bane of publishers in those days was the subscriber who did not pay postage on his letter, probably thinking that inasmuch as the letter contained subscription

money, the publisher would be only too happy to pay the postage. Finally, in July, 1840, the editors complained:

Letters have been flooding the Post Office of late, directed to us with the postage unpaid; the principle part of which will of necessity, be remailed for Washington. All letters to us for the future, will not receive attention unless the Postage is PAID.

Our subscription for one year is one dollar in advance: a letter comes requesting the paper for one year, containing \$1; Postage 25 cents, in the course of three months the second letter makes its appearance, requesting the paper be directed to another Post Office: Postage 25 cents. After a short time a paper gets miscarried and one number is missing; the subscriber, anxious to keep the volume complete, sends the third letter requesting the lost no. Postage 25 cents. The fourth letter comes lumbering along in a few days requesting the paper be stopped at the office as he is about to move into the place: Postage 25 cents. The next letter that comes has a silver dollar, to pay for the paper for one year; excess of postage 75 cents. How do you think printers can live?

Political advertising made its first appearance in the *Times and Seasons* in August, 1840. Although the advertisements were in the form of announcements, it is likely that the candidates made adequate payment for space in the Mormon paper. The announcements read:

For delegate to Congress from Iowa,  
AUGUSTUS C. DODGE.  
For Council from Lee county,  
EDWARD JOHNSON.<sup>6</sup>

A large number of Mormons were settling in Lee County, Iowa, across the river from Nauvoo. Among them was Brigham Young, of Montrose, who succeeded Joseph Smith as president and led the migration to the Rocky Mountains.

At various times during the first year of the *Times and Seasons*, Smith and Robinson announced their plans to publish a weekly newspaper for the community. The first of these announcements was made in the April issue. Two

6. Both men were elected.



weekly papers were later published for short periods: the *Wasp*, from April 16, 1842, to April 28, 1843, was succeeded by the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, May 3, 1843, to October 29, 1845. Neither lasted long, even though they were as "official" as the *Times and Seasons*.<sup>7</sup>

That paper began its second year of publication on November 1, 1840, with the first of its bimonthly issues. A change in editorship followed on January 1, 1841, when Robinson stepped out,<sup>8</sup> turning control over to Don Carlos Smith. Robert B. Thompson became associate editor. Although the paper maintained the same format and kind of content, it assumed a new liveliness under Smith and Thompson.

Dominating the news in the January 15, 1841, issue was the story of the Nauvoo charter which had been granted by the Illinois legislature December 16, 1840, to become effective the first Monday in February, 1841. This charter gave virtual autonomy to the city of Nauvoo, authorizing the establishment of its own courts, a separate militia, and a university, and granting the city all other powers not specifically prohibited by the federal and state constitutions. Alleged abuse of the charter led to much of the anti-Mormon feeling that soon began to appear in Illinois and culminated in the death of Joseph and his brother Hyrum in 1844.

On February 15, 1841, the *Times and Seasons* ran the full text of Mayor John C. Bennett's inaugural address. Now regarded by Mormons as a Benedict Arnold, Dr. Bennett (he was a medical doctor) rose to prominence shortly after

7. Franklin W. Scott, *Newspapers and Periodicals of Illinois, 1814-1879* (*Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library*, VI, Springfield, 1910), 260; Winifred Gregory, ed., *American Newspapers, 1821-1936* (New York, 1937), 136. The *Neighbor* became the *Hancock Eagle* in 1845, and was still a Mormon paper, though it was edited by Dr. W. E. Matlack, a non-Mormon. On Matlack's death in 1846 the *Eagle* was sold and became the anti-Mormon *New Citizen*.

8. The advertisement "E. Robinson, Book and Fancy Job Printer" appeared thereafter on the back page. Robinson's office was at the corner of Water and Bain streets—presumably in the same building as the *Times and Seasons* office.

joining the church in 1840. He was instrumental in pushing the Nauvoo charter through the Illinois legislature and as a reward was elected the city's first mayor. Various reasons, including immoral conduct, are given for his disaffection a short time later. He toured the eastern part of the country making violently anti-Mormon speeches, which were mentioned in the *Times and Seasons*.

Black-bordered columns were used for the first time on August 16, 1841, to record the death, on August 7, of Editor Don Carlos Smith. Two weeks later the death of Robert B. Thompson, the new associate editor, was also announced in black-bordered columns. Ebenezer Robinson temporarily resumed the editorship and engaged Gustavus Hills as associate editor, but in a few months the paper had another new editor — the Prophet Joseph himself. In the March 1, 1842, issue he stated:

This paper commences my editorial career. I alone stand responsible for it, and shall do for all papers having my signature henceforward. I am not responsible for the publication or arrangement of the former paper; the matter did not come under my supervision.

Although some historians say that Smith took the paper over because he was dissatisfied with the way it was being run, no apparent reason for his dissatisfaction can be found in the issues edited by Robinson. The latter was a printer, however, not an editor, and his editorial sins, if any, were ones of omission and not of commission.

To assist him in his new position as editor-in-chief, Joseph Smith chose two stalwarts from the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. They were John Taylor, a dark-eyed convert from Milnthorpe, in northern England, and Wilford Woodruff, a native of Connecticut. Both later served terms as president of the church, but Woodruff is probably better known because of his manifesto abolishing the practice of polygamy in the church.

Shortly after the change of editors, the office of *Times and Seasons* was moved to a newly constructed building at the

*John Taylor, who succeeded Joseph Smith as editor of the Times and Seasons. He was severely wounded by the mob that killed Joseph and Hyrum Smith.*



corner of present-day Kimball and Seventh streets. This building is standing today in remarkably good condition.

The real reason for Joseph Smith's assumption of the editorship in 1842 soon became obvious. In 1835, when church headquarters was still in Kirtland, Ohio, a young man named Michael H. Chandler came there with an exhibition of five Egyptian mummies, which, he said, had been bequeathed to him by an uncle who had dug them from an Egyptian tomb. Besides the mummies, Chandler had some papyrus rolls which caught the Prophet's attention. He studied one of the rolls, jotted down a few notes, and announced that the Book of Abraham had been discovered at last. To substantiate his announcement, he sent the scroll and his translation to an Egyptian language scholar in Philadelphia, and reported that the scholar had found the translation to be substantially correct. The church then purchased Chandler's mummies and rolls, and the Prophet proceeded to make a complete translation. When he took over the *Times and Seasons*, he had just finished the translation and wanted it published to all the world.

Accordingly, the new editor's first issue contained on its first page a facsimile of one set of hieroglyphics together with the translation. This was later reproduced in the *New York*

*Herald* by its enterprising editor, James Gordon Bennett, and picked up by other eastern newspapers; among them, the *Dollar Weekly Bostonian* and the *Boston Daily Ledger*. Other facsimiles and translations followed in subsequent issues of the *Times and Seasons*, and were later compiled in a church book called *The Pearl of Great Price*.

The Prophet started another "continued story" in the first issue under his editorship. He introduced it by stating:

At the request of Mr. John Wentworth, editor and proprietor of the *Chicago Democrat*, I have written the following sketch of the rise, progress and persecution and faith of the Latter-day Saints of which I have the honor, under God, of being the founder.

(The "sketch" ran in installments, appearing in every issue of the *Times and Seasons* for the next four years, save one, and that was the issue which announced the death of Joseph and his brother Hyrum.)

Seven months in the editor's chair was enough for Joseph Smith, and on November 15, 1842, he announced his resignation: "I beg leave to inform the subscribers of the *Times and Seasons* that it is impossible for me to fulfil the arduous duties of the editorial department any longer."<sup>9</sup>

John Taylor succeeded Smith as editor, and Wilford Woodruff became assistant editor. These two men ran the paper for the next three and a half years. During some of that time they also published the *Nauvoo Wasp* and the *Nauvoo Neighbor*, but the *Times and Seasons* was the paper everyone relied upon.

Meanwhile, Nauvoo continued to grow and prosper. By 1844 it was a flourishing city, almost eighty per cent Mormon. But there were signs of unrest. People in surrounding communities were growing suspicious of the Mormons. By voting practically as a bloc in the 1842 elections, the

9. Shortly after his resignation as editor, the Prophet was arrested, tried, and acquitted on a charge of attempted assassination of former Governor L. W. Boggs of Missouri, who, on October 27, 1838, had ordered the state militia to exterminate the Mormons in Missouri. Proceedings of the trial took most of the space in the two July issues of 1843.

Mormons had displayed their vast political power, and it was feared that they would have even more in the 1844 elections, in which Illinois was a pivotal state. If the Mormons voted together, they could probably swing the state to either party. Aware of his political power, Joseph Smith began corresponding with some of the leading contenders for the presidential nominations. He received replies from John C. Calhoun and Henry Clay to his question about redress for the Mormons' Missouri persecutions, but he considered both replies evasive.<sup>10</sup> He did not receive answers from President Martin Van Buren or Lewis Cass, and there is no record of his writing to James K. Polk.

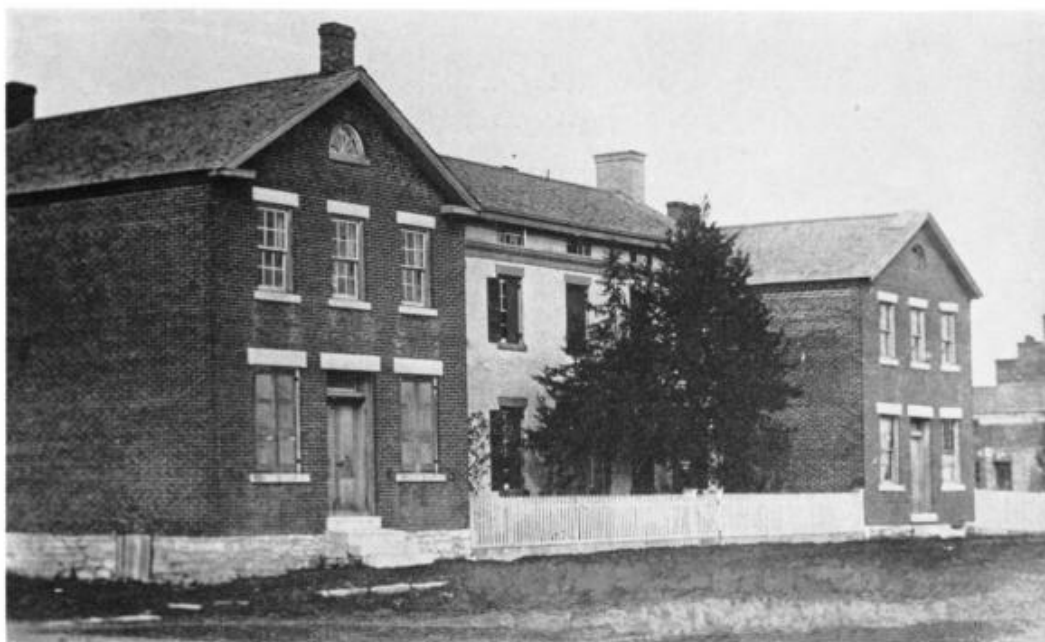
Dissatisfied with the responses of these men, Joseph Smith announced his own candidacy for the Presidency of the United States on a platform of "reform, Jeffersonian democracy, free trade and sailors rights."<sup>11</sup> Six pages of the May 15 *Times and Seasons* were devoted to his campaign platform. The June 1 issue announced that Smith's running mate for Vice-President would be Sidney Rigdon, then first counselor, or vice-president, of the church, who had been a Campbellite preacher in Pennsylvania before he became a Mormon in 1833.

But the presidential campaign soon became a secondary issue. Trouble had been brewing all spring among a group of dissident church members led by William Law, who had ranked in authority just below Smith and Rigdon. Law's supporters were accused of plotting against the Prophet's life and were excommunicated on April 18. Shortly thereafter, they obtained a press, brought it to Nauvoo, and on May 10 issued the prospectus for a paper to be called the

10. Smith's exchange of correspondence with Calhoun was published in the issue of Jan. 1, 1844; his exchange with Clay is in the June 1 issue.

11. The first announcement was made in an editorial in the Feb. 15, 1844, *Times and Seasons*, headed "Who Shall Be Our Next President?" and concluding with this paragraph: "Whatever, therefore be the opinions of other men our course is marked out and our motto henceforth will be GENERAL JOSEPH SMITH."

The quotation is from Resolution No. 5, adopted at the "State Convention" held in Nauvoo on May 17, 1844.



*The Times and Seasons office was moved in 1842 into the building at the left, which, at that time, was newly constructed.*

*Nauvoo Expositor.* Its slogan was “The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” The prospectus stated the new paper would advocate repeal of the Nauvoo charter, oppose union of church and state, and support free discussion. Sylvester Emmons, an attorney, was to be the editor.<sup>12</sup>

The first and only issue of the *Expositor* appeared on June 7, 1844. It was a vitriolic sheet, aimed almost exclusively at discrediting Joseph Smith. Seven men — William Law, his brother Wilson Law, Charles Ivins, Francis M. Higbee, Chauncey L. Higbee, Robert D. Foster, and Charles A. Foster — were listed as the publishers. Their preamble, in the June 7 issue, said in part:

We all verily believe, and many of us know of a surety, that the religion of the Latter Day Saints, as originally taught by Joseph Smith, . . . is verily true . . . [but] we are earnestly seeking to explode the vicious principles of Joseph Smith, and those who practice the same abominations and whoredoms. . . .

Many of us have sought a reformation in the church, without a

12. On the excommunication see Roberts, *History of the Church*, VI: 341. The prospectus is in *ibid.*, 443-44, as well as in the *Expositor*.



*Wilford Woodruff was assistant editor of the Times and Seasons and later served as president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.*



public exposition of the enormities of crimes practiced by its leaders, thinking that if they would hearken to counsel, and shew fruit meet for repentance, it would be acceptable with God, as though they were exposed to public gaze. . . but our petitions were treated with contempt.<sup>13</sup>

The paper told how young women converts who came to Nauvoo from far-off places were taken off alone by Smith, sworn to secrecy, and then seduced under the guise of being a "spiritual wife." Some of the apostles were also charged with the same practice.

In an article dealing with Smith's presidential candidacy, the paper stated that Smith "has two indictments against him right now, one for fornication and adultery, the other for perjury. Our readers can make their own comments."<sup>14</sup> There were three affidavits in the paper, signed by William Law, his wife, Jane Law, and Austin Cowles, in which they swore that they had seen revelations written by the Prophet concerning plurality of wives and the marrying of virgins.

In assailing the Nauvoo charter, the *Expositor* told the story of one Jeremiah Smith (no relation to the Prophet)

13. The author used an original copy in the Newberry Library. The only other extant copies are in the Illinois State Historical Library and the Latter-day Saints church archives, Salt Lake City.

14. *Ibid.*

who had fled to Nauvoo to escape a warrant from the District of Columbia, where he was wanted for embezzling \$4,000. It recounted how the Prophet had denied to the United States Marshal any knowledge of the man's whereabouts until assured that Jeremiah could be brought before a magistrate in Nauvoo for a preliminary hearing of removal. Whereupon, said the *Expositor*, the man was promptly produced, taken before a friendly judge, and released on a writ of habeas corpus. The defiance of the United States District Court, the paper charged, made a mockery of the law.

A wave of protest and indignation swept through Nauvoo when the *Expositor* made its appearance. There was talk of mobbing the office. The city council, with the Prophet sitting as mayor, ordered the press destroyed. Their legal authority, they said, was Blackstone, who asserted that "scurrilous prints may be abated as a nuisance." (Later, it was pointed out to the city council that "prints" did not mean presses.) The council resolution of June 10 read:

Resolved, by the City Council of the city of Nauvoo, that the printing-office from whence issues the *Nauvoo Expositor* is a public nuisance and also all of said *Nauvoo Expositors* which may be or exist in said establishment; and the Mayor is instructed to cause said printing establishment and papers to be removed without delay, in such manner as he may direct.

W. RICHARDS, Recorder.

GEORGE W. HARRIS,  
President, *pro tem.*<sup>15</sup>

Smith ordered the city marshal to destroy the press, pi the type, and burn the papers, and directed the Nauvoo Legion to stand by to render any necessary assistance. The only resistance encountered was a locked door, which the marshal had to break down to carry out his orders.

The destruction of the press played right into the hands of Law and his henchmen, for they set fire to their own building and fled to Carthage, the county seat, with tales of being driven from their homes. They also charged the

15. Roberts, *History of the Church*, VI: 448.

# TIMES AND SEASONS.

"Truth will prevail."

Vol. V, No. 12.] CITY OF NAUVOO, ILL. JULY, 1, 1844. [Whole No. 96.

**Awful assassination of JOSEPH AND HYRUM SMITH!—The pledged faith of the State of Illinois stained with innocent blood by a Mob!**

On Monday the 24th inst., after Gov. Ford had sent word, that those eighteen persons demanded on a warrant, among whom were Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith *should be protected*, by the militia of the State, they in company with some ten or twelve others, started for

by due course of law;" but the Governor's troops, to the amount of one or two hundred, took them to the Court House, when the hearing was continued till Saturday the 29th, and they were remanded to jail. Several of our citizens had permits from the Governor to lodge with them, and visit them in jail. It now began to be rumored by several men, whose names will be forthcoming in time, that

*The Times and Seasons rules were turned in mourning over the "Awful assassination of Joseph and Hyrum Smith!" This picture is the same size as the original.*

church leaders with burning their building, as well as destroying the press.

Warrants were issued for the arrest of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Governor Thomas Ford went from Springfield to Carthage to take personal command of the situation, and several units of the state militia were called to duty. On Governor Ford's personal assurance of full protection, the brothers submitted to arrest and were placed in the jail at Carthage. There they were killed by an armed mob.

John Taylor, editor and publisher of the *Times and Seasons*, who was visiting at the jail when Joseph and Hyrum were killed, received four bullet wounds, and possibly his life was saved by the fact that a fifth bullet was stopped by his watch in his left vest pocket.<sup>16</sup>

Although the *Expositor* ignited the flame that consumed the church in Nauvoo, the paper was mentioned only casually in the *Times and Seasons*, for the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith completely overshadowed everything else. No issue appeared between June 1 and July 1, and it took the entire issue of July 1 to report the deaths and funerals. The column-rules were turned, making them heavy black lines on every page.

16. *Times and Seasons*, July 15, 1844.

As the Mormons began to recover from the shock of losing their leader, they were confronted with the problem of finding a new one. Principal claimants to the church presidency were Sidney Rigdon, vice-president (or, as he was properly known, first counselor), and Brigham Young, senior member of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, and therefore president of the group. A vast majority of the members decided to sustain Young, and Rigdon left Nauvoo, taking a small group with him to Pittsburgh. Other small dissident groups went to Michigan, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, Iowa, and to other parts of Illinois. The *Times and Seasons* made scant mention of these groups but did devote parts of two issues to the "trial" at which Rigdon was accused of being disloyal and of spreading falsehoods.

The paper continued to publish for a year and a half after Smith's death, but it seemed to lose some of its zip. This was but a reflection of conditions in Nauvoo, where mounting pressures from the outside had forced the Mormons to make plans for leaving the city. There is surprisingly little information about these troubles in the *Times and Seasons*. Most of its articles were still of a religious nature. Apparently Editor Taylor felt it important to sustain the faith.

The *Times and Seasons* packed its type and presses and left Nauvoo after publishing its final issue on February 15, 1846. It had printed its own obituary in the February 1 number, and the final issue seemed almost anticlimactic. The only news about the forthcoming emigration was an article about a group of Mormons who were going from New York to San Francisco on the sailing ship *Brooklyn*.

Everything considered, Editor Taylor's final editorial on February 1, 1846, is surprisingly mild:

All things are in preparation for a commencement of the great move of the Saints out of the United States; — (we had like to have said, beyond the power of Christianity,) but we will soften the expression, by merely saying, and *back to their "primitive possessions,"*



*Nauvoo home of John Taylor, Times and Seasons editor*

as in the enjoyment of Israel. It is reduced to a solemn reality, that the rights and property, as well as the lives and common religious belief of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *cannot be protected* in the realms of the United States, and, of course, from one to two hundred thousand souls, must quit their freedom among freemen, and go where the land, the elements, and the worship of God *are free*.

About two thousand are ready and crossing the Mississippi to pioneer the way, and make arrangements for summer crops at some point between this and the "Pacific," where the biggest crowd of good people, will be the old settlers.

To see such a large body of men, women and children, compelled by the inefficiency of the law, and potency of mobocracy, to leave a great city in the month of February, for the sake of the enjoyment of *pure religion*, fills the soul with astonishment, and gives the world a sample of fidelity and faith, brilliant as the sun, and forcible as a tempest, and as enduring as eternity.

May God continue the spirit of fleeing from false freedom, and false dignity, till every Saint is removed to where he "can sit under his own vine and fig tree" without having any to molest or make afraid. *Let us go — Let us go.*